

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00

TRSE-00 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 H-02 OMB-01

DIWY-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 SIL-01 LAB-04 OES-03

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R 080845Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9420

INFO USMISSION USUN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY MANILA BY POUCH

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PARIS FOR UNESCO; ROME FOR FODAG; VIENNA FOR UNIDO; MANILA FOR  
USADB

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, UNDP, BM

SUBJECT: CERP 0008 - EVALUATION OF UN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

REF: STATE 64907

SUMMARY. THE UNDP PROGRAM IN BURMA HAS DOUBLED IN SIZE IN THE  
PAST TWO YEARS MAKING IT THE SECOND LARGEST IN THE WORLD. THE  
UN RES REP APPEARS TO BE THE EFFECTIVE LEADER OF ALL UN AGENCY  
PROGRAMS IN BURMA, ENJOYS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE IBRD (AND TO  
A LESSER DEGREE THE ADB) AND HAS IMPROVED UN CONTACTS WITH THE  
OPERATIONAL MINISTRIES OF THE GUB. WHILE COORDINATION WITH OTHER  
MULTILATERAL DONORS IS GENERALLY GOOD, EFFECTIVE LINKS WITH BI-  
LATERAL PROGRAMS ARE STILL LACKING. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TO  
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DATE HAS BEEN GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL ALTHOUGH SOME OBVIOUSLY HAVE

BEEN STRONGER THAN OTHERS. DIFFICULTIES HAVE BEEN ENCOUNTERED IN LOCATING SUITABLE INTERNATIONAL TECHNICIANS AND LENGTHY DELAYS IN EQUIPMENT DELIVERY ARE COMMON. ON THE BURMESE SIDE, THE BUREAUCRATIC RIGIDITY OF THE GUB MAKES PROJECT FORMULATION A TIME CONSUMING PROCESS AND OPERATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS DIFFICULT. ON THE WHOLE, HOWEVER, THE GUB HAS UNDERTAKEN ITXRESPONSIBILITIES IN SUPPORT OF PROJECTS IN A SERIOUS, RESPONSIBLE FASHION AND THE UNDP HAS APPARENTLY WON INCREASING ACCEPTANCE WITHIN THE GUB. ONE PROBLEM AREA THE GOVERNING COUNCIL MAY WISH TO ADDRESS IS THE LACK OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UN AND THE GUB COVERING THE STATUS OF THE RES REP OFFICE, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE UNDP PROGRAM IS TO EXPAND SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE COMING YEARS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE UNDP PROGRAM IN BURMA FOR MANY YEARS REPRESENTED ONLY A HOLDING OPERATION WITH MINIMAL STAFF AND FUNDING, LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE DESIRE OF THE GUB TO MINIMIZE MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. IN 1972, HOWEVER, THE GUB SHIFTED POLICY AND BEGAN TO DEMONSTRATE AN INCREASING INTEREST IN UN ASSISTANCE PARALLEL TO ITS RENEWED INTEREST IN WORLD BANK, ADB, AND BILATERAL COMMODITY LOANS. THE PROGRAM EXPANDED RAPIDLY IN 1973 AND 1974 FROM \$15 MILLION FOR THE 1972-76 UNDP PLAN TO \$31 MILLION FOR THE 1974-78 PLAN WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IN JUNE. THE PROGRAM NOW PROJECTED FOR BURMA HAS BECOME EQUAL IN SIZE TO THAT FOR INDONESIA AND SECOND ONLY TO INDIA, THE UNDP'S LARGEST COUNTRY PROGRAM.

2. FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNDP OPERATION KEYED TO THE ISSUES RAISED IN REFTEL AND BASED ON OBSERVATIONS OF EMBASSY OFFICERS AND THE COMMENTS OF THE UN RES REP.

3. ROLE OF UNDP IN THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM - THE UN RES REP APPEARS TO BE THE EFFECTIVE LEADER OF THE VARIOUS UN AGENCY PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT IN BURMA. THE WHO AND UNICEF REPS ARE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THEIR OWN HEADQUARTERS TO COORDINATE AND CONSULT WITH HIM ON THEIR PROGRAMS WHICH ARE TO A LARGE DEGREE INTEGRATED IN THE UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAM. (UNICEF AND WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM FORMULATION). OTHER UN/IFI AGENCIES ARE NOT SEPARATELY REPRESENTED IN BURMA. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RES REP AND THE IBRD ARE ALSO APPARENTLY SATISFACTORY. VISITING IBRD MISSIONS ALWAYS TOUCH BASE WITH THE RES REP AND, IN FACT, OPERATE FROM HIS OFFICE.

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RELATIONS WITH THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, ARE LESS WELL ESTABLISHED. OF FIVE ADB MISSIONS TO BURMA IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, THREE DID CONSULT THE UNDP RES REP WHILE TWO DID NOT. CLOSER CONTACT IS BEING ENCOURAGED HOWEVER. PREVIOUSLY THE OFFICE OF THE RES REP SUFFERED FROM LACK OF EXECUTIVE PERSONNEL, ONLY TWO INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS BEING ASSIGNED. THIS HAS NOW BEEN INCREASED TO FOUR WHICH SHOULD ENHANCE SIGNIFICANTLY THE OFFICE'S CAPABILITIES.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RES REP AND GUB HAVE IMPROVED MARKEDLY IN THE PAST TWO YEARS AS A RESULT OF INCREASED GUB INTEREST IN UNDP ACTIVITIES. PREVIOUSLY, THE RES REP WAS LIMITED IN HIS CONTACTS TO THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE WHICH COORDINATES FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. NOW, HOWEVER, DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN THE OFFICE OF THE RES REP AND THE SECTORAL MINISTRIES (AGRICULTURE, LABOR, TRANSPORT, ETC.) HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. LIKE OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONS IN RANGOON, UNDP FINDS THAT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE TIES APPEARS TO DEPEND ON THE INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES; SOME ARE QUITE ACCESSIBLE TO THE UN PERSONNEL WHILE OTHERS REMAIN DISTANT, E.G., INDUSTRY AND INTERIOR. (IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE BURMESE, WHILE IMPROVED, ARE HARDLY INTIMATE DUE IN PART TO THE STANDOFFISH CHARACTER OF THE CURRENT REGIME AS WELL AS BURMESE INHERENT DISTRUST OF FOREIGNERS.)

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE - AS NOTED ABOVE, THE COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE IS, (IN THEORY, AT LEAST, CONDUCTED BY THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE. COORDINATION BETWEEN UNDP, OTHER UN AGENCIES AND IBRD IS RATHER GOOD. HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENT COORDINATION BETWEEN THE MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO BURMA, APPARENTLY BECAUSE THE GUB PREFERS TO DEAL WITH EACH DONOR SEPARATELY. EFFORTS BY THE UNDP RES REP TO PROMOTE TIES WITH DONOR COUNTRIES (PRINCIPALLY JAPAN AND THE FRG) HAVE MET ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS.

6. ROLE OF RESREP VIS-A-VIS OTHER UN SYSTEM ACTIVITIES - ASIDE FROM THE PROGRAMS OF THE OTHER UN AGENCIES ALREADY DESCRIBED, THE ONLY UN "AD HOC" ACTIVITY CONDUCTED IN RECENT TIMES HAS BEEN A \$1 MILLION PROGRAM IN DISASTER RELIEF AND REHABILITATION PROMPTED BY LAST AUGUST'S HEAVY FLOODS. THIS PROGRAM HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE RES REP HIMSELF WHO HAS BEEN DESIGNATED BY UN HEADQUARTERS AS RELIEF COORDINATOR.

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R 080845Z APR 75  
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9421  
INFO USMISSION USUN  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
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7. COUNTRY PROGRAM REVIEWS - DUE TO THE SHARP GROWTH IN UNDP PROGRAMS IN BURMA IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN INTENSIVELY REVIEWED AND EXTENSIVELY REVISED BOTH IN 1974 AND 1975. THE RES REP FEELS THAT THE REVIEW PROCESS SHOULD NOT BE OVERLY RIGID AND THAT REVIEW EACH YEAR MAY NOT BE NECESSARY ONCE THE PROGRAM IS FUNCTIONING. HOWEVER, TO ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS AND TIME LINESS OF PROJECT FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION, A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM HAS BEEN ADOPTED WHICH PERMITS CONSTANT MONITORING OF PROJECTS AND IDENTIFIES OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS AS THEY ARISE.

8. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION - AS A RULE, PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION HAS BEEN FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL TO DATE. AMONG PROJECTS GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE MOST POSITIVE ARE ASSISTANCE TO THE AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTES (BUR/71/521 AND BUR/72/003), THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (BUR 72/011) AND MEDICAL TRAINING (BUR/71/520). AMONG THOSE WITH A LESS IMPRESSIVE RECORD ARE THE POLYMER RESEARCH LABORATORY PROJECT, WHICH HAS BEEN SLOW TO GET UNDERWAY, AND THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SITTANG RIVER DEVELOPMENT PRE-INVESTMENT SURVEY WHOSE RESULTS THUS FAR HAVE BEEN LARGELY NEGATIVE, I.E., DETERMINING WHERE DAMS SHOULD NOT BE BUILT. (OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS OF THIS MAJOR PROJECT HAVE BEEN TOUCHED ON IN PREVIOUS CERP 0008 REPORTS.) OF COURSE, THE BULK OF THE PROJECTS IN THE GREATLY EXPANDED 1974-77 PLAN ARE ONLY STARTING TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS.

9. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY UNDP IN CARRYING OUT ITS PROJECTS STEM BOTH FROM THE UN AND THE BURMESE SIDES. LENGTHY DELAYS IN FINDING SUITABLE INTERNATIONAL TECHNICIANS AND IN THE DELIVERY OF EQUIPMENT ARE COMMON. ON THE BURMESE SIDE, THE ELABORATE BUREAUCRACY MAKES PROJECT FORMULATION A TEDIOUS, TIME CONSUMING PROCESS AND PERMITS LITTLE OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY ONCE A PROJECT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SIGNED. (IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GUB IS VERY PROMPT AND RELIABLE IN CONTRIBUTING COUNTERPART FUNDS AND PERSONNEL ONCE THE PROJECT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN CONCLUDED.) UN TECH-

NICAL ADVISERS ALSO FACE IRRITATING PERSONAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS LENGTHY DELAYS IN OBTAINING RE-ENTRY PERMITS WHEN PLANNING A TRIP OUT OF THE COUNTRY, DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING FREE ENTRY OF PERSONAL EFFECTS, ETC.

GUB OFFICIALS OCCASIONALLY ARE MILDLY CRITICAL OF THE ABILITIES OR PROFESSIONAL STANDING OF SOME UNDP EXPERTS, BUT OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT OVER-ALL THEIR COMPETENCE IS ADEQUATE.

10. PROJECT EVALUATION - THE UNDP RES REP HAS RECENTLY CONCLUDED TRIPARTITE REVIEWS OF ALL UNDP PROGRAMS IN BURMA IN WHICH HIS OFFICE, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EXECUTING AGENCY, AND THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE SECTORAL MINISTRY CONCERNED AND PLANNING FINANCE, HAVE PARTICIPATED. THESE HAVE PROVEN USEFUL IN IDENTIFYING OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS ALTHOUGH THE BUREAUCRATIC RIGIDITY OF THE GUB OFTEN HINDERS OR DELAYS THEIR RESOLUTION. THE RES REP HAS COMMENTED THAT THE GUB REPRESENTATIVES ALWAYS COME EXTREMELY WELL PREPARED AND BRIEFED ON THE PROJECTS, MAKING THE REVIEWS MORE PRODUCTIVE.

11. WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT - THE RES REP IS WELL AWARE OF THE UN'S INTEREST IN THIS AREA. TO DATE, HOWEVER, FEW OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE BURMESE CONTEXT HAVE ARISEN WHICH HAVE PERMITTED FORMULATION OF PROJECTS IN SUPPORT OF THESE OBJECTIVES.

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12. OTHER COMMENTS - WHILE HINDERED SOMEWHAT BY THE DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN THE NATURE OF THE GUB, THE UNDP IS FAVORED BY THE FACT THAT ONCE THE GUB DOES COMMIT ITSELF TO A PROJECT, USUALLY IT FOLLOWS THROUGH IN A SERIOUS RESPONSIBLE FASHION. THE UNDP PROJECTS HAVE APPARENTLY WON INCREASING ACCEPTANCE BY THE BURMESE NOT ONLY FOR THEIR QUALITY BUT FOR THE OBVIOUS POLITICAL ADVANTAGES TO A NEUTRALIST STATE OF MULTILATERAL OVER BILATERAL ASSISTANCE. ONE ISSUE THAT CONCERNS THE RES REP HOWEVER AND WHICH MIGHT BE SUITABLE FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, IS THE LACK OF A BASIC AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UN AND THE GUB ON THE STATUS OF THE RES REP'S OFFICE. AN EARLIER ACCORD COVERING THIS RELATIONSHIP WAS WITHDRAWN AT THE REQUEST OF THE GUB AND A STANDARD AGREEMENT SUGGESTED BY UN AS REPLACEMENT WAS RETURNED BY THE GUB WITH NUMEROUS AMENDMENTS UNACCEPTABLE TO UN HEADQUARTERS. THE RES REP IS UNDERSTANDABLY CONCERNED BY THE LACK OF AN AGREEMENT DEFINING HIS STATUS ESPECIALLY AS THE UNDP PROGRAM TO BURMA IS SWIFTLY INCREASING IN SIZE AND SCOPE.

13. UNDP PROJECTS IN BURMA TEND TO CONTAIN A SOMEWHAT HIGHER PROPORTION OF EQUIPMENT AND LOWER PROPORTION OF EXPERT SERVICES THAN IN MANY COUNTRIES, A SHIFT WHICH OCCASIONALLY INVOLVES HARD BARGAINING AT THE PROJECT FORMULATION STATE. IN GENERAL, THIS SHIFT OF PRIORITIES IS JUSTIFIED IN VIEW OF THE NUMBER AND QUALI-

FICATIONS OF BURMESE COUNTERPARTS AND OTHER OFFICIALS, AND THE  
COUNTRY'S CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE.  
OSBORN

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## Message Attributes

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